

MU Extension Human Resources Employment Regional Specialist-in-Training Program

Updated October, 2015

Purpose

To provide an option within the statewide staffing plan for Missouri counties interested in growing a specific local University of Missouri Extension program. It strives to build a local county resource that, in time, will have the capacity to contribute on a regional level.

This program is designed to provide an opportunity to recruit, retain and develop high performing employees in preparation for positions requiring a master's degree. Further, it is designed to fill a position that remains open due to a failed search or to fill a position that has been open for a prolonged period of time. In order to contribute to the success of the Regional Specialist-in-Training, current faculty will be assigned to serve in a mentoring role. This program is not intended to replace the current Master's degree model that applies to hiring in MU Extension.

Funding for this program is provided through regional funds with the goal of achieving program outcomes in high priority programmatic areas while addressing succession planning priorities, enhancing the diversity of our workforce, and improving revenue generation opportunities.

Scope

Working with an assigned mentor (i.e. Regional Specialist) and possessing a bachelor's degree in a field aligned with the designated area of specialty, a Specialist-in-training will build both academic knowledge and experience in a programmatic area for a period of three years. During this time, the Specialist-in-Training is expected to complete a master's degree and develop skills to effectively design, implement, deliver, and evaluate programs.

The training period will be guided by an educational plan and timeline developed by the Specialist-in-Training, the Regional Director, and the Program Director. The Specialist-in-Training will receive mentoring, and per University policy, after 6 months in the position will be eligible to receive tuition assistance for University of Missouri classes. A flexible work schedule, including evening responsibilities, will allow the Specialist-in-Training to attend classes.

The Specialist-in-Training will not only be prepared for a program assignment in a highly responsible programmatic regional position, but will also work to collaborate with agencies and organizations to address needs in a programmatic area with a revenue generation component. The Specialist-in-Training

may have responsibility for up to two counties and will be encouraged to become a welcome and contributing member of the local communities served.

After a period of three years and the completion of a master’s degree in the assigned area of specialty, the Specialist-in-Training will be eligible to apply to become a Regional Specialist. The Specialist-in-Training may apply for the position in the area in which they had been assigned if it is available. Alternatively, he or she may apply for a similar position as available in extension. The application is dependent on whether there is adequate local funding for the position, as well as adequate space to accommodate housing the position.

Process

MU Extension directors may –secure a “Specialist-in-Training” through a proposal process by using the “Hiring Request form” that is available in HR (Form B). Priority approval will be given to requests which:

- Are integrally aligned with the staffing plan
- Have been agreed upon by the Regional Director and Program Director
- Have identified a source of regional funds. (This could include council funds provided as a partner in this process.)
- Fill a priority position that has not been filled due to a failed search or a prolonged opening
- Enhance the diversity of our workforce; and
- Improve revenue generation opportunities

The Associate Vice Provost will approve of these requests on a case-by-case basis. Upon approval of the proposal, the University of Missouri’s hiring processes and policies apply.

HR procedures

1. **University title** – When appropriate, the University title of “Extension Associate” with a working title of “(specific program) Educator, Specialist-in-Training” will be used.

i.e. University title: Extension Associate
 Working title example: Livestock Educator, Specialist-in-Training

2. **NTT consideration** – According to the non-tenured track ranked Extension program, positions which require a minimum of a bachelor’s degree or lower are not eligible to be considered for NTT. Therefore, position information related to NTT will not be included for Specialist-in-Training vacancies. Additionally, individuals hired, regardless of the level of the academic achievements, will not be eligible to apply for NTT during their employment in the specialist-in-training position.

3. **Search committee members** – Initial searches should be conducted on a regional or national basis as appropriate with the involvement of a faculty-based search committee. As an example, regional faculty positions will be conducted with the following positions, at a minimum, on the search committee:

Regional Director (chair)
Program Director or other faculty designee
Regional faculty member
Human Resources Manager or designee (if available)
County Council Representative

A presentation should be provided during the search committee interviews.

4. Position announcement standard language - Standards to include on vacancy announcements for appropriate "Specialist-in-Training" postings include:

Type of appointment - This is a 12-month academic position may be renewed annually for up to three years, as it is designed to prepare high performing individuals for Regional Specialist positions upon completion of an approved master's degree and excellent work experience.

General duties - Under the guidance of an assigned mentor and director(s):

- Deliver research-based educational programs within a specific program area, primarily serving up to two counties.
- Develop and maintain partnerships and team collaborations. Promote opportunities for the community to engage in MU Extension programs.
- Generate and manage revenue to sustain and grow essential programs.
- May serve as County Program Director
- Pursue a master's degree as soon as educational assistance benefits become available. Work with Regional Director and Program Director to establish a reasonable plan-of-work which provides the flexibility needed to balance educational demands with Extension priorities.

Minimum requirements - In order to be eligible to be considered, the following criteria must be met:

- Meet the minimum bachelor's degree requirement for the position.
- Have plans to achieve a master's degree within three years.
- Have the desire and passion to seek advancement opportunities within MU Extension upon completion of an applicable master's degree.

Application process - All candidates must apply online at www.hrs.missouri.edu/find-a-job by submitting a cover letter, resume, list of 3-5 references and academic transcripts.

Hiring range - Hiring salary will follow the standard MU Extension bachelor's level faculty pay rates.

For further questions, please contact MU Extension Human Resources.